

**STATE OF MAINE**  
**COMMISSION ON GOVERNMENTAL ETHICS AND ELECTION PRACTICES**

135 State House Station  
Augusta, Maine 04333-0135  
Tel: (207) 287-4179 Fax: (207) 287-6775  
Website: [www.maine.gov/ethics](http://www.maine.gov/ethics)

**EXPENDITURE GUIDELINES FOR CERTIFIED  
MAINE CLEAN ELECTION ACT CANDIDATES**

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**All revenues distributed to certified candidates from the Maine Clean Election Fund must be used for campaign-related purposes. The Commission has determined that the following expenditure guidelines apply to permissible campaign-related expenditures:**

♦ **Traditionally in Maine, campaign expenses have included:**

- Printing and mailing costs;
- Political advertising expenses;
- Campaign supplies such as signs, bumper stickers, etc.;
- Office supplies for managing the campaign;
- Campaign events (e.g., food, rent of tent or hall, etc.);
- Campaign staff expenses;
- Campaign travel expenses such as fuel and tolls.

♦ **Maine Clean Election Funds may not be:**

- Used to repay previous loans or debts;
- Contributed to another candidate, political committee, or party;
- Paid to a consultant, vendor, or campaign staff, other than in exchange for genuine campaign goods or services;
- Used to make independent expenditures supporting or opposing any candidate, ballot measure, or political committee;
- Used in connection with the election of any candidate or campaign other than the one for whom the funds were originally designated.

♦ **“Campaign-related purposes” include, but are not limited to, traditionally accepted purposes for which a candidate for public office would make expenditures of funds received from private sources, while taking into account the public nature of the funds distributed to certified candidates, the underlying objectives of the Maine Clean Election Act, and the reasonableness of the expenditures under the circumstances.**

♦ **Personal expenses are not permissible campaign-related expenditures. For the purpose of these guidelines, the term “personal expenses” means expenses that exist irrespective of the candidate's campaign. “Personal expenses” include, but are not limited to:**

- Day-to-day household food items and supplies;
- Mortgage, rent, or utility payment for the candidate's personal residence, even if part of the residence is being used by the campaign;
- Clothing, including specialized attire for political functions, but allowing clothing of *de minimis* value such as T-shirts or caps imprinted with a campaign slogan;
- Tuition payments, other than training of campaign staff to perform campaign tasks;
- Salary payments to the candidate's family, unless those payments reflect the fair market value of *bona fide* services rendered to the campaign.

♦ **Unspent funds from a losing primary campaign and all general election campaigns must be returned to the Maine Clean Election Fund. Property that is not exclusively used in a campaign that is purchased with MCEA funds must be sold at fair market value and those proceeds reimbursed to the Fund with any other unspent funds.**

♦ **Enforcement:** the Commission reviews all expenditures disclosed by MCEA candidates in campaign finance reports. The Commission is authorized to investigate misuse of MCEA funds, including by subpoena. Fraudulent misreporting of expenditures of MCEA funds is punishable with criminal or civil sanctions.

The Commission will determine the permissibility of other expenditures on a case-by-case basis, using the general definition of personal expenses noted above, and periodically will amend these guidelines to reflect those determinations.